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DE RUEHC #6782 1532331  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0000  
INFO RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0000

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0000

UNCLAS STATE 056782

SIPDIS  
USUN FOR ECOSOC SNOWDEN  
NAIROBI FOR UN PERMREP

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: UNGA SENV UNGA AORC  
SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS ON RESPONSE TO UN REGARDING  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EVENT

REF: SNOWDEN-WEBBER EMAIL

¶1. This is an action request. See paragraphs 2-3.

¶2. USUN is requested to deliver the U.S. response in paragraph 3 to the UN regarding its views on a "possible high-level event on sustainable development" under cover of a Diplomatic Note. This response was requested in a note verbale from the UN Division of Economic and Social Affairs dated March 6, 2009 (ref A) in compliance with UN General Assembly resolution A/63/212.

¶3. BEGIN CORRESPONDANCE: The United States appreciates the opportunity to express its views on the possibility of convening a high-level event on sustainable development. The United States is dedicated to the pursuit of sustainable development and we strongly believe that international cooperation is essential to this important endeavor.

The outcomes of previous events, including the World Summit on Environment and Development in Rio and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, have offered vital contributions to our global efforts towards sustainable development. Indeed, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the UN Forum on Forests, the various multilateral environment agreements and the work of UNEP continue to contribute actively to the global sustainable development agenda.

Our understanding of the still-current decision in ECOSOC Resolution 2003/61, which was agreed at CSD-11 in 2003, is that the international community already anticipates an overall appraisal of the outcomes of the previous World Summits on Sustainable Development in 2017 at the end of the CSD's multi-year program of work. This review is important to a thorough discussion of all the aspects of sustainable development as elaborated in The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the Program of Further Implementation of Agenda 21. This review will complete our work and allow us to assess the way forward. In keeping with this, we believe we have effectively already agreed to convene a high-level event on sustainable development in 2017, i.e. a "Rio 25" meeting.

In the language of UNGA resolution A/RES/63/212, the General Assembly acknowledged the proposal to convene a world summit on sustainable development in 2012 and then invited member state opinions on the possibility of a high-level event on sustainable development. During discussion on this resolution, some countries shared their desire to host a "Rio 20" summit in 2012. On this particular subject, we continue to have questions, including: what would a 2012 high-level event aim to accomplish; how will it add value to

the ongoing work in sustainable development; how would the proposed high-level event fit in with the multi-year CSD program of work and how would it avoid disrupting the conclusion of the CSD process? In particular, we are concerned that the preparatory process for Rio 20 would require commitments of time and energy that will potentially conflict with the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 CSD cycles. In considering our position on the possibility of a 2012 meeting, we need more information to understand the purpose of the proposed high-level event, to what end our efforts would be engaged and how the preparatory process might proceed.

One of our primary concerns is the timing of the two proposed high level events or summits, one of which, 2017, has already been agreed by governments. If a Rio 20 event is held in 2012, would we still convene a 2017 Rio 25 event? If the purpose of the two high-level events is the same, member states should consider postponing any summit until 2017 at which time we would have an unprecedented opportunity to review and assess the entire history of sustainable development agreements and achievements in order to inform our next steps and embark on new sustainable development goals. Many member governments, including the United States, do not have the resources to prepare for and staff two major summits within five years.

We thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this subject and we look forward to additional fruitful discussion on this and other sustainable development priorities, but most especially on implementation of agreements already made and our efforts to improve the lives of people and protect the environment. END CORRESPONDANCE.  
CLINTON